

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 173

DELIVER TO AMB. BUFFUM 9 AM LOCAL TIME JAN. 19

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOG FR UN

SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF UNGA

1. WE FOUND LEPRETTE'S ASSESSMENT OF THE 28TH GA INTERESTING AND HEARTILY CONCUR IN HIS VIEW THAT WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE VARIOUS AREAS OF THE THIRD WORLD TO REGAIN SENSE OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS.

2. WITH RESPECT TO NAMIBIA AND COMORES AND LEPRETTE'S SUGGESTION THAT COORDINATED WESTERN POSITIONS BE SOUGHT, WE BELIEVE THIS IS SOMEWHAT UNREALISTIC IN VIEW OF THE RATHER DIFFERING VIEWS AMONG WESTERN COUNTRIES ON THESE SUBJECTS. (FRANCE HAS NOT ACCEPTED ICJ DECISION; THEY MAY BE INDEED FOOTDRAGGING ON COMORE INDEPENDENCE.) AT A MINIMUM HOWEVER WE WOULD PROFIT IN THE FUTURE FROM KNOWING IN ADVANCE WHAT FRENCH INTENTIONS ARE ON FOURTH COMITE RESES GENERALLY IN THE SAME WAY WE HAVE INFORMED THEM OF OUR VOTING PLANS. WE THINK IT WOULD BE ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE AND HELPFUL FOR AMB BUFFUM TO MENTION THIS TO LEPRETTE DURING THEIR JAN 19 DISCUSSION.

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3. ALTHOUGH LEPRETTE, IN ADDITION TO GENERAL COMMENTS

ON UN AND SPECIFIC SUBJECT OF CHARTER REVISION, SEEMED TO STRESS PROBLEMS RAISED BY INCREASING THIRD WORLD MILITANCY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN UN FORA, WE HAVE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT OVERALL IMPRESSION OF FRENCH PERFORMANCE HERE. EVEN "RIGID JURIDICAL PRINCIPLES" SEEM TO BE SUBJECT TO FRENCH PRAGMATISM. FOR INSTANCE, FRENCH LEGAL VIEWPOINT MIGHT WELL HAVE DICTATED A NEGATIVE VOTE ON THE GUINEA/BISSAU ITEM IN THE GA. IN THIS CONNECTION WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT, WERE GUINEA/BISSAU TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO UN, FRANCE WOULD ABSTAIN IN SC, COUNTING ON US TO VETO. FRENCH JURIDICAL VIEWS ON CONVENTIONS ALSO SEEM SOMEWHAT ELASTIC WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THEIR EFFORTS FOR "PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS".

4. IN PAST FEW MONTHS PERHAPS MOST ILLUMINATING FRENCH ATTITUDE HAS BEEN IN REGARD TO MIDDLE EAST QUESTION. WE UNDERSTAND FRENCH--AND UK--DISSATISFACTION OVER EXCLUSION FROM PARTICIPATION IN MAINSTREAM OF MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS. PRESUMABLY FOR THIS REASON FRANCE REFUSED ALL ASSISTANCE, I.E. TRANSPORT AND EQUIPMENT, TO HELP PUT UNEF IN PLACE. ON THE OTHER HAND UK WHICH HAD RESERVATIONS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF FRANCE DID PROVIDE SOME ASSISTANCE TO UN FOR THIS PURPOSE.

5. FRENCH WERE PARTICULARLY ACTIVE IN ENCOURAGING SC ACTIVISTS AND GADFLIES TO PUT PRESSURE ON SYG AND TO AROUSE OTHER SENTIMENT TO KEEP SC AND UN INVOLVED IN PRE-GENEVA CONFERENCE MANEUVERISMS. WHEN TIME CAME FOR SC TO ADOPT RESOLUTION GENERATED BY NON-PERMANENT MEMBERS REGARDING SYG'S PARTICIPATION IN CONFERENCE, FRANCE PLAYED PARTICULARLY UNHELPFUL ROLE, INITIALLY HOLDING OUT FOR PUBLIC MEETING DESPITE CLEAR PREFERENCE BY EGYPT AND MOST OTHERS, AS WELL AS OURSELVES, TO AVOID DAMAGING PUBLIC DEBATE. IN ADDITION FRENCH REP WAS CLEARLY UNHAPPY THAT RES DID NOT MORE CLEARLY AND PRECISELY DEFINE SYG'S MANDATE FOR CONFERENCE. (SEE USUN 5572).

6. IN THIS SAME CONNECTION FRENCH SUDDEN INTEREST IN ARTICLE 100 OF CHARTER AND QUESTIONABLE INTERPRETATION OF PARA 1 OF THAT ARTICLE SEEMED TO US TO BE MISCHIEF-MAKING.
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CARRIED TO ULTIMATE EXTREME FRENCH INTERPRETATION COULD EFFECTIVELY HAMSTRING ANY ACTION BY THE SYG WITHOUT A MANDATE FROM SUITABLE UN ORGAN.

7. CONCERNING LEPRETTE'S ATTEMPTS TO EXPRESS FRENCH DEMAGOGY IN PERCENTAGE TERMS, OUR EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN THAT THE GOF VOTES ACCORDING TO ITS PRAGMATIC INTERESTS ALL THE TIME, CITING "FURIDICAL PRINCIPLE" AND SUCH MERELY AS

PLAUSIBLE RATIONALES.

8. IN SUMMARY, ALTHOUGH WE WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE
COOPERATION AND COORDINATION--AND WILL DO SO WHENEVER
POSSIBLE--OUR CURRENT EXPERIENCE WITH FRENCH IN THE
UN LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT THIS WOULD BE AN UNCERTAIN
ROAD IN VIEW OF THE "PRAGMATIC" INTERESTS WHICH OFTEN
DETERMINE FRENCH POSITION ON UN ISSUES.
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